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Inductive Studies in the Acts.

By CLYDE W. VOTAW,
The University of Chicago.

THE PRIMITIVE ERA OF CHRISTIANITY.

AS RECORDED IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

30-63 A. D.

THIRD DIVISION.—PERIOD OF GENTILE CHRISTIANITY.

Text : Acts 15 : 36—28 : 31. Time : Thirteen years, 51-63 A. D. Localities :
Asia Minor, Greece, Palestine, Italy. Leader : Paul.

THE principle which had been worked out between 34 and 50 A. D. and formally recognized by the Jerusalem conference at the close of that period, that Gentile Christians were not to be required to conform to Jewish rites and customs, was firmly established during the next thirteen years, 51-63 A. D. This was the special work of the apostle Paul. The Jewish Christians in Jewish localities continued to combine Jewish rites and customs with their Christianity. In Gentile districts the Jewish Christians were in the main disposed to continue their Judaism, but as a result of Paul's strenuous and constant efforts the ceremonial barriers between Jews and Gentiles were to a large extent broken down. The gospel became established as a universal and spiritual religion, independent of Jewish rites and customs, for the reason that the greatest number of Christians were in this period Gentiles, and the most influential churches were those founded by Paul. Gentile Christianity thus prevailed over Jewish Christianity, both in numbers and in influence. It was historically true that the gospel was taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles, although there was a host of Jewish Christians. They would have weighed the gospel down with ceremonies and limitations inconsistent with its essential liberty and breadth, so that in God's providence the gospel was put into other hands for preservation. It is the record of this great transfer and development, the narrative and the interest concerned with Gentile Chris-

tianity, which is given by the last half of the Book of Acts, and in the Pauline epistles. This third period witnesses the second and third evangelizing tours of Paul, in which his great work as an apostle of the Gentiles was principally done; then his long imprisonment in Cæsarea and Rome, with his two years' ministry in chains at the capital of the empire. The period closes with the Book of Acts, at the end of the first Roman imprisonment in 63 A. D.

SEC. 18. PAUL'S SECOND EVANGELIZING TOUR.

Acts 15 : 36—18 : 22.

51-54 A. D.

Asia Minor, Greece, Antioch

I. STUDY OF THE FACTS.

Let the following subclassification of the material in this section be verified, corrected, or improved :

Par. 1. 15 : 36-40, Preparation for the Second Evangelizing Tour.

Par. 2. 15 : 41—16 : 5, Revisitation of Churches formerly Established.

Par. 3. 16 : 6-10, Paul Divinely Directed to Work in Macedonia.

Par. 4. 16 : 11-40, Incidents of Paul's Labors in Philippi.

(1) vss. 11-15, the conversion of Lydia.

(2) vss. 16-18, the healing of the deranged girl.

(3) vss. 19-24, Paul and Silas scourged and imprisoned.

(4) vss. 25-34, the providential deliverance and the jailer's conversion.

(5) vss. 35-40, release and departure of Paul and Silas from Philippi.

Par. 5. 17 : 1-9, Work and Persecution in Thessalonica.

Par. 6. 17 : 10-15, Brief but Successful Ministry in Berœa.

Par. 7. 17 : 16-34, Paul's Experience in Athens.

(1) vss. 16-22a, the religious condition of the city.

(2) vss. 22b-31, Paul's address to the Athenians.

(3) vss. 32-34, the small success of his efforts.

Par. 8. 18 : 1-17, Eighteen Months of Fruitful Ministry in Corinth.

(1) vss. 1-4, Paul works at his trade and teaches.

(2) vss. 5-11, his rejection by the Jews of the city.

(3) vss. 12-17, the arraignment of Paul before Gallio.

Par. 9. 18 : 18-22, The Return to Antioch from Corinth, by Way of Miletus and Jerusalem.

1. Prepare a concise abstract of the material contained in this

section, noting the chief facts and recounting them in your own language.

2. Write out a careful paraphrase of Paul's address at Athens (17 : 22-31), reproducing as exactly as possible the thought and spirit of the text.

3. Observe the itinerary of the second evangelizing tour, and the kind of work done : (1) Revisitation in Syria, Cilicia, and Galatia (the territory of the first tour), occupying about nine months. (2) New work in Macedonia, at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, occupying about nine months, and in Achaia, at Athens and Corinth, occupying eighteen months. (3) Return from Corinth to Antioch of Syria by way of Cenchreæ, Ephesus, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem. (4) Two epistles still extant were written on this journey, First and Second Thessalonians, a few months apart in 53 A. D., from Corinth.

II. TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION.

1. *Paul's purpose and fellow-workers of the second tour.*—How long was it after the first tour, and how long after the Jerusalem conference, that the second tour was begun? From whom came the proposal of the first tour (*cf.* Acts 13 : 1-3), and of the second? What was Paul's idea and purpose for this tour (*cf.* Acts 15 : 36)? Did the plan and extent of the tour change after its beginning, so as to include not only revisitation, but also new work in Greece? What had he to deliver to certain churches, and which ones (*cf.* Acts 15 : 23, 41; 16 : 4)? Who constituted the party for the first tour (*cf.* Acts 13 : 2-5)? Who for the second (*cf.* Acts 15 : 36-40)? Why did not Barnabas accompany Paul on this journey? Why did Paul decline to have Mark accompany them, and was he right in so doing? Is it probable that the contention over Mark was rather superficial, while the real disagreement between Paul and Barnabas was of a fundamental doctrinal character, as indicated in Gal. 2 : 11-14? Why did Barnabas and Mark go to Cyprus for evangelizing work, and what is known of their subsequent history? Who was Silas (*cf.* Acts 15 : 22, 32, 40), and why did Paul choose him as a companion for the journey? What other fellow-workers were added to Paul's company subsequently (*cf.* Acts 16 : 1-3, Timothy; 16 : 11, Luke)?

2. *The itinerary and time of the tour.*—Indicate upon the map the territory which Paul purposed at the outset to revisit (*cf.* Acts 15 : 36, Galatia, the district of the first tour; Acts 15 : 41, Syria and Cilicia). Who had established the churches in Syria and Cilicia? Were the

“decrees” (Acts 16:4; *cf.* 15:23-29) delivered to the Galatian as well as to the Syrian and Cilician churches (consider that Paul makes no mention of this in the Galatian epistle, and that Acts 16:4 may belong after 15:41)? How much time was occupied with this revisitation? How long a period was given to new work in Greece? Indicate upon the map the Greek cities in which Paul preached the gospel on this tour. Describe the districts of Macedonia and Achaia as to geography, chief cities, number and classes of population, and religion. Draw an outline map of the territory covered by this tour, and trace upon it Paul’s journey from Antioch of Syria to Corinth. Trace also the return journey of Paul from Corinth by water to Ephesus and Cæsarea, and then by land to Jerusalem and Antioch. In what year was the return made? Why is the Acts record of this second evangelizing tour so meager as to the first part of the journey? Of what portions of the tour is the account fullest, and why? Consider the indefiniteness of the running notes of time, as in 15:41; 16:1, 4, 6; 17:1, 2, 10, 13, 14; 18:1, 11, 18, 20.

3. *Providential checks and pointings in Paul’s course.*—What district is referred to in Acts 16:6 as “the region of Phrygia and Galatia” (see Ramsay’s extended discussion, *Church in the Roman Empire*, pp. 74-82) on the North-Galatian hypothesis and on the South-Galatian hypothesis? Why had Paul wished to work in Asia (indicate this district upon the map)? Explain the meaning of the statement that he was “forbidden of the Holy Ghost.” Why did Paul then turn to Bithynia (indicate this district, and also Mysia, upon the map)? Why was his plan again interrupted? Explain the meaning of the statement that “the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.” What was the reason for the call to Macedonia at this particular time? Are we to understand that these providential checks and pointings were of the nature of external directions or internal promptings? Consider the divine assurance given Paul at Corinth (*cf.* Acts 18:9-11). What other instances were there in Paul’s career of similar providential guidance? What is thus indicated as to God’s care over the establishment of his kingdom on earth?

4. *The finding of Timothy and Luke.*—Was Timothy probably one of Paul’s converts on the first tour (*cf.* 1 Tim. 1:2)? State the facts as to his parentage, and his consequent relation to Judaism. How had he been brought up religiously (*cf.* 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15)? How old was he when he now joined Paul’s missionary company? Why was he chosen by Paul for a fellow-worker (*cf.* Acts 16:2; 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14;

2 Tim. 1:6)? Why had not Timothy been circumcised in infancy? What were Paul's reasons for having him now submit to the rite (*cf.* 1 Cor. 10:32)? Compare Paul's action here with his refusal to circumcise Titus, as recorded in Gal. 2:1-5. Observe Timothy's subsequent relation to Paul and his work (*cf.* Acts 20:4; Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Cor. 1:1; 1 Thess. 3:2, 6; Col. 1:1; Phile. 1; Phil. 1:1; 2:19; Heb. 13:23). Consider the significance of the pronoun "we" in Acts 16:10-17 (*cf.* also 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16). Does this indicate the accession to the missionary party of Luke, the author of the Acts? Ascertain what can be known concerning the country, nationality, age, profession, personal characteristics, and relation to Christianity of Luke. Where and how did he meet with Paul? Why did Luke join him in his work? Why is his entrance into the history given such slight notice?

5. *The results of Paul's labors in Philippi.*—Locate Philippi upon the map, and ascertain the important facts about the city as it then was—its size, inhabitants, political status, religious condition. Why did Paul begin his work in Europe here? Since there was no synagogue in Philippi, is it probable that there were but few Jews there? What was the "place of prayer" by the riverside (Acts 16:13)? Note and explain the fact that women are so prominently mentioned in the work at Philippi. Were the women of verse 13 Jews and Jewish proselytes? What was Lydia's religious attitude previous to her acceptance of Christianity? Why is her conversion particularly spoken of? What are we to understand was the malady of the girl who had "a spirit of divination"? Was it mental derangement or literal demoniacal possession? Explain the "soothsaying" which she was supposed to perform. How came she to give repeated testimony to the divine mission of Paul and his fellow-workers? Why was this an annoyance to Paul? Why did he not heal her at once, and why did he finally do so? How was her "soothsaying" a source of gain to her masters? What revenge did they take upon Paul and Silas for releasing the girl from her unfortunate condition? Consider the circumstances of the jailer's conversion. What was his religious condition previous to his relations with Paul and Silas? Explain the directions given him (16:31) as to how he might be saved. Consider these Philippian Christians as types of what the gospel was to do for pagan peoples. As to the success of Paul's work in this city compare the epistle to the Philippians, which indicates that the church he now founded here was one of the most faithful and best of all which he established.

6. *Roman persecution of the Christian missionaries.*—Was this Roman persecution of the gospel missionaries at Philippi the first (recorded) instance in which the Romans actually opposed Christianity? Who had been up to this time the instigators of, and for the most part the actors in, the uprisings against Paul and his work (*cf.* Acts 13 : 50; 14 : 2, and elsewhere)? Was this Roman hostility at Philippi directed against the Christians as distinguished from Jews, or against Paul and Silas as trouble-making Jews without reference to their Christianity (*cf.* Acts 16 : 20)? It was not then an intentional persecution of Christianity as such? What precedent for the persecution of the Jews by the Romans had been lately set at Rome (*cf.* Acts 18 : 2)? Explain the immediate occasion of the Philippian persecution. What were the customs set forth by Paul which it was not lawful for the Philippians to receive or to observe (vs. 21)? What was done with Paul and Silas? Why was their dismissal ordered the next morning? Why did Paul insist (vss. 36, 37) on a formal release? Had not Paul made known to the authorities the day before that he and Silas were Roman citizens? How had Paul obtained Roman citizenship (*cf.* Acts 22 : 25-28)? What did such citizenship secure to a person in Paul's position? Why did Paul and Silas leave the city after their release?

7. *Gospel work in Thessalonica and Berœa.*—Ascertain all that can be known about Thessalonica and Berœa as they then were. Why did Paul choose to preach the gospel there? Were there more Jews in these two cities than there were in Philippi? What were the three points of Paul's teaching to the Thessalonian Jews? How was this teaching received by them? Were his main converts, however, from among the devout Gentiles? Was the church founded here mainly Jewish or Gentile (*cf.* 1 Thess. 1 : 8-10)? How long did Paul work in Thessalonica? Study the Thessalonian epistles as fully as time permits to learn of the character and success of Paul's work in Thessalonica. Consider that he largely supported himself by manual labor during this ministry (*cf.* 1 Thess. 2 : 9; 4 : 11; 2 Thess. 3 : 6-15). Did he also receive money from friends (*cf.* Phil. 4 : 16)? Recount the circumstances under which Paul and Silas left Thessalonica. What was the charge made against them (Acts 17 : 6, 7; *cf.* Luke 23 : 1, 2)? How much truth was there in it? How different was the treatment which Paul and Silas received at Berœa? Why were the Jews here so tolerant and docile? Were there many Gentile converts also? Is it to be understood that a church was established at Berœa, as there had

been at Philippi and Thessalonica; if so, why is no mention made of the fact anywhere?

8. *Paul's experience at Athens.*—Observe (Acts 17:16) that Paul was only passing through Athens, it not being his intention to attempt the establishment of the gospel here at this time; why not? Ascertain something about Athens as it then was, politically, socially, religiously. Secure if possible a map of the city, and locate upon it the market place (vs. 17) and the Areopagus (vss. 19, 22). How was Paul impressed with Athens? How did he undertake to reach the citizens with the gospel while he was among them? What did they understand was the substance of his message (vs. 18)? Was Paul given a fair hearing; if so, why? What was the Areopagus, and why was Paul taken hither to give his formal presentation of Christianity to the Athenians? Consider the audience whom he addressed, as to their intellectual and religious views, their mental habit, and their capacity for taking hold of new truth. What was the purpose of Paul in his address? Make out an analysis of the thought: (1) introduction, vss. 22, 23; (2) God's relation to the material universe, vs. 24; (3) God's relation to men, vss. 25–28; (4) the nature of God, vs. 29; (5) his moral government of men, vss. 30, 31. Did Paul thus preach the unity and majesty of God, and the dependence and brotherhood of man? Observe the skill with which Paul attached his teaching to the strange altar in Athens. Consider carefully the exact meaning of “somewhat superstitious” (vs. 22, in Greek *deisidaimonesterous*, which is not well translated in the Revised Version, for the term was used by Paul in a good sense, not with reproach). What are the chief characteristics of the address? How far did the Athenians accept Paul's presentation of religious truth? To what points did they object, and why? Was it in any degree due to the manner or substance of Paul's teaching on this occasion that the gospel found no greater favor in Athens at this time? Was there a Christian church at Athens in the apostolic period?

9. *The establishment of the Corinthian church.*—Locate upon the map the city of Corinth, and ascertain something of its history previous to the Roman restoration in 46 B. C. What was the political and commercial importance of Corinth in Paul's time? What was the moral and religious condition of the city? Why did Paul select it as a field for work? State what is told about Aquila and Priscilla. Were they already Christians when Paul found them in Corinth? If so, where had they come into contact with Christianity? When and why did the Roman Emperor Claudius order the Jews to leave Rome? How long

was the edict in effect? Describe Paul's trade of tent-making. Why did he work at it here in Corinth? How did Paul begin his gospel ministry in Corinth (Acts 18:4; *cf.* 13:43; 14:1; 17:1-4, 12; 18:19)? Explain the phrase (18:5) "constrained by the word." How did the Jews receive his teaching? Why were they not able to drive him out of the city, as at Thessalonica and other places? What course did Paul pursue when rejected by the Jews? With Acts 18:6 compare 13:45, 46, 51. What success had Paul among the Gentiles of Corinth? What was the nature of the vision given Paul at this time (18:9, 10)? What was the purpose of the vision? Ascertain what is known about Gallio and his office here mentioned. By whom, when, and why was Paul brought before him? Compare Acts 16:19-24. Why did Gallio refuse to hear the case? Was this a proper ruling, from the point of view of Gallio's judicial office? Why was Sosthenes beaten by the court officers? Explain the words (18:17) "Gallio cared for none of these things." Is it right to cite Gallio as an illustration of religious indifference? How long did Paul carry on his gospel work in Corinth (18:11; *cf.* 18:18)? Was the outcome of the work a large, strong body of believers, some of them Jews but the great majority Gentiles? Study the Corinthian epistles as fully as time permits, to learn of the environment in which the Corinthian church was founded. Note that during the early part of Paul's period of work in Corinth he wrote the two epistles to the Thessalonians.

10. *The return to Antioch and results of the tour.*—In what year, and at what time of the year, did Paul leave Corinth to return to Antioch of Syria? Where and what was Cenchreæ? Are we to understand from 18:18 that it was Aquila or Paul who had the vow referred to? What was the nature and purpose of this vow? What significance has the incident if the vow was Paul's? Was there, in fact, anything in Paul's principles which would deter him, under favorable circumstances, from performing a vow (*cf.* Acts 21:20-26; 1 Cor. 9:19-23)? Trace upon the map Paul's route from Cenchreæ to Ephesus. Had Paul ever been at Ephesus before? Why did he wish to stop briefly there now? When had he previously purposed to work there, and what had deterred him from doing so (*cf.* Acts 16:6)? How was Paul received by the Jews at Ephesus? Why did he not stay longer with them at this time? Whither did he go from there? Are we to understand from the phrase (18:22) "he went up and saluted the church" that Paul visited Jerusalem before going back to Antioch? Was this Paul's fourth Christian visit to Jerusalem (*cf.* Acts 9:26; 11:30; 15:2)? What was Paul's purpose

in this visit? What did the visit accomplish? Why is so slight reference made to it? Why did Paul return to Antioch at the close of this second evangelizing tour? Reviewing now the tour as a whole, what was accomplished in the way of revisitation of churches already established, and how much time was given to this branch of the work? How many new churches were founded, and at what places? How much time was occupied with the new work? Which of Paul's extant letters were written on this journey? How important for the spread and truth of Christianity was this work which Paul and his fellow-workers were doing?

III. OBSERVATIONS AND TEACHINGS.

1. *Organization*.—No information is given in the Acts or Thessalonian epistles concerning the organization of the Christians which were the result of Paul's labors.—It is to be understood, however, that elders were appointed in each community, according to the custom adopted upon the first tour (*cf.* Acts 14: 23).—When Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians from Rome in 63 A. D. he mentioned in the address "bishops and deacons;" the bishops were the same as the elders, but just when the deacons were first appointed in the church of Philippi, or in any church, cannot be known.—Paul addressed the Christians in Thessalonica as the "church of the Thessalonians" (1 Thess. 1: 1; 2 Thess. 1: 1), so that the term "church" was used at least this early of the local body of believers (*cf.* Acts 15: 41; 16: 5).

2. *Environment*.—Paul uniformly taught first among the Jews of each place, and with some success; then, when they became opposed to him, he turned to the Gentiles with the gospel.—The Jews do not seem to have been numerous in Macedonia and Achaia; only in Thessalonica were they sufficiently strong and intolerant to drive Paul from their city, and later from Berea.—The first persecution of the Christians by the Romans was at Philippi, but it was against Paul and Silas as being troublesome Jews, not against Christianity as such.—Gallio, when Paul was brought before him by the Jews of Corinth, refused to interfere with Paul's activity, judging it to be not in conflict with the provisions of the Roman law.—Thus Judaism was losing its power against the gospel, and the Roman government was giving it protection.

3. *Institutions*.—Neither in the Acts record of this journey nor in the Thessalonian epistles is there reference to the observance of Sunday or of the Lord's Supper; it may, however, be understood that such observance existed, as the latter certainly, and the former probably, were

established before this time.—Baptism is again mentioned in connection with the conversion of the Philippian jailer.—The Jewish custom of performing vows seems to have been observed by Paul in one instance, for some unrecorded reason.

4. *Belief and teaching*.—In presenting the gospel to the Jews Paul argued the Messiahship of Jesus by showing from the Old Testament prophecies how it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead.—The Jews were for the most part not convinced, however; and Paul's converts were chiefly from the Gentiles, especially from those devout ones who were regular attendants upon the synagogue services.—At Athens Paul was spiritually impelled to preach against the polytheism of that city of learning and culture; he presented Christianity in its highest form, teaching that there was but one God, wholly spiritual, made manifest in nature and in revelation as Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of the entire physical and moral universe, of whom all men are sons, and through whom all men are brethren.—But the teaching about Jesus and the resurrection was politely scouted by his Athenian hearers.

5. *Daily life*.—The wise and energetic labors of Paul and his fellow-workers, Silas, Timothy, and Luke, arouse supreme admiration; with such missionaries and such a message Christianity must speedily prevail in the world.—The new Christians showed by their lives the purity, joy, and exaltation of the gospel which they professed (*cf.* 1 Thess. 1 : 10, and elsewhere).

6. *Divine guidance*.—Paul was providentially directed on this tour to take up the gospel work in Macedonia and Achaia, Ephesus and its province being left until a later time.—He was given assurance at Corinth that the work he was doing was God's work, and he would be prospered in it.—Through Paul and his fellow-workers the universal and spiritual religion of Christianity was introduced and essentially established among the Gentile peoples.

Literature.—Upon this section see the commentaries on Acts, especially those of GLOAG, HACKETT, MEYER, and the CAMBRIDGE BIBLE. Also NEANDER, *Planting and Training of the Christian Church*, Vol. I, pp. 168–215; FARRAR, *Life and Work of St. Paul*, chaps. 24–28; CONYBEARE AND HOWSON, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chaps. 8–12; STIFLER, *Introduction to the Book of Acts*, sec. xiv; RAMSAY, *St. Paul the Traveler*, pp. 178–269; *Church in the Roman Empire*, pp. 74–89; WEIZSÄCKER, *Apostolic Age of the Christian Church*, Vol. I, pp. 252–302; BIBLE DICTIONARY, articles, Aquila, Areopagus, Asia, Athens, Barnabas, Berœa, Bithynia, Cenchrœa, Claudius (Cæsar), Corinth, Ephesus, Gallio, Luke, Lydia, Macedonia, Mark, Mysia, Philippi, Priscilla, Prison, Scourging, Silas, Thessalonica, Timothy, Troas.